

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
South Dakota Department of the Military



STATEMENT FROM U.S. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVES

This week U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin announced that he is considering possible new presumptive conditions that may qualify for disability compensation related to Agent Orange exposure.

"After thoroughly reviewing the National Academy of Medicine (NAM)'s latest report regarding veterans and Agent Orange, and associated data and recommendations from the NAM Task Force, I have made a decision to further explore new presumptive conditions for service connection that may ultimately qualify for disability compensation," Secretary Shulkin said. "I appreciate NAM's work and the commitment and expertise of the VA's NAM Task Force, and look forward to working with the Administration on the next steps in the process."

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will now begin work with the Administration to concurrently conduct a legal and regulatory review of these potential presumptive conditions for awarding disability compensation to eligible veterans.

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VIETNAM 50TH COMMEMORATIVE BOOK

As you know, RMS Productions collaborated with us in distributing *Korea Reborn* and *The Liberation of Kuwait* as a gift to our South Dakota veterans. These publications were funded by Korea and Kuwait respectively.

RMS Productions has now developed a Vietnam War 50th commemorative book entitled, 'A time to Honor'.

Each state is afforded the opportunity to localize the foreword section of it (Pages 12-20).

We are still in search of funding sources that we could utilize to buy the South Dakota version for our Vietnam Veterans. However, you can view an on-line version of the book on our web-site: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>.



2019 CORN PALACE MURALS TO HONOR THE MILITARY

Mitchell city officials this week announced the 2019 Corn Palace murals theme as "A Salute to the Military." The Corn Palace's outdoor walls will feature a military theme for the first time since 1916.

The 2019 murals will be the first designed by DWU students in the university's digital media and design department.





Public Agent Orange Forum

WHEN: November 4, 2017

WHERE: Meade County Court House
1300 Sherman Street in Sturgis
Commissioners Chambers (2nd Floor)

TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
and
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Moderator: Maynard Kaderlik (Vietnam Veterans of America Agent Orange Chairman)

Sponsored by Sturgis Arts Council and VVA #1039
Two session opportunities are offered. This is a very important event for those who were exposed and for their family members.

VA LAUNCHES PROGRAM AIMED AT PROVIDING VETERANS MORE OPTIONS IN CLAIMS DISAGREEMENTS

Today, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it will launch the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program, or "RAMP," with the goal of providing veterans with the earliest possible resolution of their disagreement with the VA's decision on their benefit claims.

RAMP will provide expanded opportunities for veterans to enter the new, more efficient claims review process outlined in the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, which was signed into law by President Donald J. Trump on Aug. 23.

"At its core, the VA's mission is to provide veterans with the highest quality of service," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "The new process under the RAMP initiative reflects major steps in not only the VA's effort of continuous improvement, but also in providing greater choice for veterans and their families."

The VA began its 18-month implementation of the new process immediately after the bill became law.

By February 2019, all requests for review of the VA decisions will be processed under the new, multi-lane process. The VA's legacy appeals process was slow and complex. The new law streamlines the process and includes safeguards ensuring claimants receive the earliest effective date possible for their claims.

Participation in RAMP is voluntary; however, veterans can expect to receive a review of the VA's initial decision on their claim faster in RAMP than in the legacy appeals process. The initiative allows participants to have their decisions reviewed in the Higher-Level or Supplemental Claim review lanes outlined in the law.

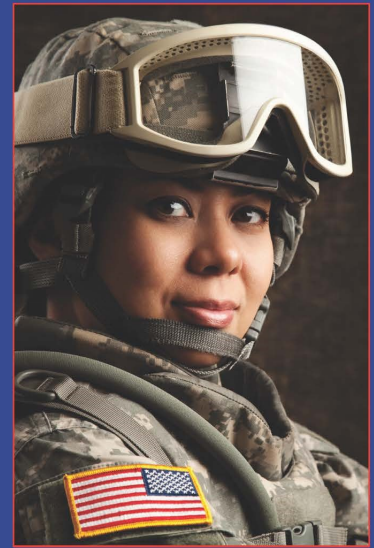
The reviewer can overturn previous decisions based on a difference of opinion, or return it for correction. Participants who select the Supplemental Claim Lane may submit new evidence and may receive the VA's assistance in developing evidence in support of their claim.

Veterans who disagree with the decisions they receive in RAMP can appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals in the new process and have their appeal decided by the Board when the new law becomes effective in February 2019. Veterans who participate in RAMP will not be able to return to the legacy appeals process.

The VA encourages eligible veterans with pending appeals to participate in RAMP and the benefits of the new review process. The VA will begin sending eligible veterans an invitation to participate in early November and continue the program until February 2019.

The VA will continue working with Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and other veteran advocates to implement the new appeals process over the next several months as the VA continues to make bold, positive change on behalf of veterans, their families and survivors.





OPERATION PROTECT VETERANS



The AARP SD Fraud Watch Network and the SD Attorney General are working together to protect our state's veterans from scams that target military families.

Join us for a free fraud seminar to discuss what you can do to protect yourself and your family.

Monday, November 6 | noon – 1:30 p.m.
VFW Post 628 | 3601 S. Minnesota Avenue, Sioux Falls

This event is free to veterans and military personnel and their guests, but registration is required as lunch will be served.

Please register at aarp.cvent.com/ProtectVetsSF17
or by calling **1-844-227-9304**.



aarp.org/protectveterans



AARP
Fraud Watch
Network

Upcoming Events

Nov 4—Public Agent Orange Forum—Meade County Court House in Sturgis (2nd Floor Commissioners Chambers—1300 Sherman Street) 9:00 am and 1:00 pm (MT)
Nov 5—Salute to Veterans—Washington Pavilion—301 S. Main Avenue—Sioux Falls—3:00 pm (CT)
Nov 8—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters in Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Nov 9-13—VFW Disabled Veterans Hunt—Gettysburg
Nov 10—State Offices Closed
Nov 11—SFVAHCS Service of Remembrance—SFVAHCS—1:30 pm (CT)
Nov 11—SDSU Military Appreciation Day—Kickoff at 2:00 pm (CT)
Nov 11—American Heroes Outdoors Veterans Day Banquet—Aberdeen Elks Lodge #1046 at 5:00 pm (CT)
Nov 11-12—Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat—Joy Ranch—Watertown
Nov 15—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—12:00 noon (CT)
Nov 16—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American Legion—12:00 noon (CT)
Nov 18—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW Post—10:00 am (MT)
Nov 23-24—State Offices Closed
Dec 2-3—Yellow Ribbon for the 153rd EN—Mitchell
Dec 5—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Dec 12—SDDVA Mini Conference via Skype—10:00 am (CT)
December 25-26—State Offices Closed

2018

Jan 9—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—RedRossa in Pierre—9:00 am (CT)
Jan 10—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—RedRossa in Pierre—5:00—8:00 pm (CT)
Jan 18—SD American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8—Pierre—5:00 pm (CT)
Jan 28-29—VFW Legislative Conference—Ft. Pierre AmericInn
Jan 29—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Ft. Pierre—6:00 pm—7:30 pm (CT)
Feb 16-18 American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish
Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls

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